

Operation Second Wind

2013 - 2014

Mesa, AZ

Federal Legislative District(s): 5,6

PROGRAM FAST FACTS

Congressional Districts: 5 and 6
State Legislative Districts: 16, 18, 25, 26
Service Area: Maricopa / Mesa
Project Federal Share: \$ 198,710
Project Local Match: \$ 119,372
Community Volunteers Recruited: 76
Volunteer Hours Served: 6,647
Value of Volunteer Hours: \$147,165

Community Need

With a population of 448,000+ residents, Mesa, Arizona, is the 38th largest city in the country and 3rd largest city in Arizona. While there is tremendous economic diversity within the community, there remains considerable need. For example, over 65% of elementary-age children in Mesa Public Schools qualify for free or reduced lunch. As the largest city in the East Valley, Mesa has become the "hub" for serving many of the social service needs in the broader East Valley and is home to a number of human service agencies that serve the entire county.

Operation Second Wind, an AmeriCorps Program within the Mesa United Way recruits, trains and engages individuals, most of whom are 55 years of age or older, as service-delivery professionals within nonprofit human services agencies with the city of Mesa.

Program Activities

AmeriCorps members engage in a broad variety of services in a number of different programs and agencies. The diversity of service opportunities

includes such areas as providing clothing to foster children and education funds for youth, assisting with donations and case management for the homeless, and a variety of roles at family shelters including housing, volunteer and job search assistance. In the process of their service and the related training, AmeriCorps members have the opportunity to learn case management skills targeted at the support of low income families.

Program Impact

Operation Second Wind has the impact of increasing the number of individuals in need who are served by participating agencies. As a result of the training component for AmeriCorps members, it also increases the number of individuals with case management skills. Finally, experienced adults whose talents and abilities may have been "sitting on the sidelines" are now actively engaged in service to their community. As a result, Mesa is a healthier, stronger, safer, and better place to live. During the 2012-2013 program year, AmeriCorps members provided housing placement services to 2,687 economically disadvantaged individuals including those experiencing homelessness and as a result of those services 564 individuals transitioned into safe affordable housing.



Continuation - Operation Second Wind in Mesa, Arizona

Mission

The mission of Mesa United Way is to increase the ability of the people of our community to care for one another, and to ensure that essential services for children, the disabled, the elderly, and the poor are available in our community. We pursue our mission in concert with our schools, city, government, businesses, faith organizations, and non-profit agencies to create the fabric of a healthy and livable community. We rely almost exclusively on the support of the more fortunate residents, business people, and employees of the community of Mesa.

Vision

Our goal is to create lasting change in the lives of our community members. We bring together people who want to help, because working together is the best way to make lasting change. Together we can inspire hope and create opportunities for a better tomorrow. Working together to improve our community. That's what it means to LIVE UNITED.

History

The community fund in Mesa started as a response to the collapse of the cotton market in 1928. With so many people out of work, local community volunteers formed the Welfare League. Later it became known as the Mesa Community Fund. The Mesa Community Fund voted to become Mesa United Way in 1981. In 2008 Mesa United Way successfully applied for an AmeriCorps*VISTA project that placed 18 +55 year old members at 11 partner agencies in Mesa. More recently, Mesa United Way was granted an AmeriCorps State Program to continue the work that was started by the VISTA program. Operation Second Wind is a natural extension of Mesa United Way's commitment to provide services in cooperation with their partner agencies.



Partnerships

Operation Second Wind would not be possible without the financial and organizational support of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), Governor Jan Brewer's Office of Children, Youth and Families and the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism (GOCYF).

Service Sites

Following is a list of the non-profit sites where Operation Second Wind AmeriCorps members serve. Each is also a "Community Partner Agency" of Mesa United Way which means that funding is allocated to them from Mesa United Way's Community Chest.

La Mesita Homeless Shelter
Save the Family Foundation of Arizona
Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest
East Valley Adult Resources
Helen's Hope Chest
Mesa Community Action Network
YMCA of Mesa
The Salvation Army
A New Leaf
College Bound Mesa

OTHER

All of the Operation Second Wind service opportunities are part time positions.

